

Regional Seminar on Women's Employment, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment

Nepal: High Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement Project (HIMALI)

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Project Features

ADB Support: Grant Assistance (**US\$ 20 Million**)

Gender Category: EGM

Project Duration: 6 years (September 2011 – October 2017)

Executing Agency: Ministry of Agriculture Development

Implementing Agency: Department of Livestock Services

Implementing Partner: Agro Enterprise Center (AEC) of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI)

Project Districts: 10 high mountain districts of four Development Regions

Project: Key Approach

- Provide agribusiness grants to eligible farmers, farmer groups, cooperatives, and entrepreneurs (risk uptake in business investment)
 - 80% up to \$50,000
 - 50% above \$50,000 (ceiling of \$250,000)
- Extreme poor & disadvantaged groups are expected to benefit from increased employment opportunities from enterprises supported by the project.
- Social mobilization to generate project awareness & mapping of farmers/farmer groups
- AEC support for business development services, access to markets, and skills training in partnership with the private sector

Eligible Agribusinesses

- Open to any commercial enterprise related to **livestock, horticulture, non-cereal agriculture, medicinal and aromatic plants, and non-timber forest products**
 - Production
 - Processing
- Collection, storage, grading, quality management, packing for distribution and marketing;
- Agro-tourism;
- Facilities for aggregating and exporting agro-products from HIMALI mountain districts, and draft animal services and way-station facilities;
- Tracks, culverts, short road connections that are essential for agribusiness development
- Small-scale irrigation and water harvesting works that are owned, managed and maintained by registered farmer groups;
- Nurseries, planting and small civil works for community forestry and rangeland business resource development

GESI Strategies Adopted

- **Percentage targets for women and disadvantaged participation** in access to grant, information dissemination campaigns/workshops, training and capacity building
- Social Mobilization teams facilitate potential women and disadvantaged proponents in contacting **local resource persons (LRPs) to assist in business proposal writing**
- Agribusiness Grant Guideline seeks detail information on **GESI in input supplies, employment and community consultations** in business proposals
- **Legal registration of groups/cooperatives not a mandatory requirement** for grantees prior to proposal submission. This has helped poorer groups to access project grants
- **Mandatory consultation with women and disadvantaged** while preparing business plans

GESI Strategies Adopted

- **Grant Assessment Committee (GAC)** includes a **GESI expert** in addition to project Gender Specialist.
- **Fast track processing of proposals** by GAC of women-owned/led agribusiness proposals
- **Cost of proposal writing** reimbursable at the rate of than NRs 15,000 for businesses up to \$10,000 and NRs 30,000 for those between \$10,001 - \$50,000. This has greatly assisted poorer household to access project grants.

Women-led Value Chains

Allo (Himalayan Nettle)
cloth
production, Sankhuwasabha



Rainbow Trout
Farming, Rasuwa



Women-led Value Chains

Woolen blanket production, Jumla



Seabuckthorn Juice, Jomsom

GESI Results

- Total 252 agribusiness contracted of which 40 (15%) are women owned that include farmer groups, cooperatives and private firms
 - 10 medium sized agribusiness - **three women** lead/owned
 - 250 small agribusiness - **37 women** lead/owned
- 49% women, 46% janajati, 10% dalit in project related information dissemination meetings and sharing sessions
- AEC provided business advisory services to potential grantees of which 14% were women
- 46 Local Resource Persons of which 35% women trained on preparing business plan proposals and

GESI Results

- All (100%) business plans submitted to Grant Assessment Committee are assessed on GESI
- More than 11,000 persons trained in agribusiness, value chain, technical skills carried out by DPCs in coordination with AEC included 35% women
- M&E framework established at district/central level covering gender, DAGs, remoteness and value chain disaggregated grant and benefit/progress data
- GESI sensitization training carried out at the district and central level and GESI sessions included in other training programs

Other visible results on GE & WE

- Increased access of women and disadvantaged to information and technical skills
- Increased household income and profit invested on expanding/multiplying business
- Increased confidence and interest among women and disadvantaged due to demonstration effect
- Increased voice and management capacity

Challenges and Lessons

Challenges

- Lack of land entitlement, and lack of other legal documents such as marriage, citizenship certificates hinders registration in women's name
- Illiteracy and lack of exposure/ information of women and DAGs to identify feasible businesses and prepare proposals
- Low capacity to understand procedural requirements and paperwork
- Gathering employment records (especially indirect employment) created by forward and backward value chain linkages

Lessons

- Taking up business investment risks can foster entrepreneurship
- Bookkeeping and business management skills development should be a core part of such projects
- Technical skills development should be a pre-requisite to agribusiness development
- Stronger marketing linkages need to be assured by agencies such as the AEC and FNCCI
- Overall business investment climate needs to improve for larger production type agribusinesses which can create the demand for smaller production businesses.